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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 2, 3, 5, and 22.

Please amend pending claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 17, 21, 23, and 28 as follows:

-- 1(currently amended). A pontoon, said pontoon comprising:

- a plurality of generally elongated shell segments, each said shell segment being made out of a generally rigid material, each said shell segment defining a pair of generally opposed segment longitudinal ends, at least one of said segment longitudinal ends being a segment connecting end; each said shell segment having a segment peripheral wall surrounding a segment inner volume and defining at least one end aperture extending into said segment inner volume from said segment connecting end, said plurality of shell segments connecting to each other with a male-female engagement into an end-to-end configuration so as to form a generally elongated shell, said shell defining a shell longitudinal axis extending through said plurality of shell segments, said male-female engagement including a male segment connecting end connectable to an adjacent female segment connecting end, said female segment connecting end being a longitudinal end portion of said segment peripheral wall;

- a filling component positioned within said segment inner volumes, said filling component being made out of a generally buoyant material, said filling component being slidably and successively insertable through said at least one end apertures in a direction generally along said shell longitudinal axis and towards corresponding said opposed segment longitudinal end, the volume of said filling component being such that the combination of said shell and said filling component forms a generally buoyant combination.

2(canceled).

3(canceled).

4(currently amended). A pontoon as recited in claim 1 ~~claim 3~~, wherein said male segment connecting end is formed by a throat section located at a longitudinal end portion of said segment peripheral wall ~~having a periphery generally smaller than the remaining longitudinal portion of said segment peripheral wall~~.

5(canceled).

6(currently amended). A pontoon as recited in claim 4 claim 5, wherein said male segment connecting end is ~~generally slidably~~ connectable to said adjacent female segment connecting end with a longitudinal sliding engagement.

7(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 1, further comprising a closing component mounted at least partially over said at least one end aperture of an end one of said shell segments for at least partially closing said at least one end aperture of said end one of said shell segments.

8(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 1, wherein said segment peripheral wall includes a base section, a generally opposed supporting section and a pair of spacing sections extending therebetween in a generally spaced apart relationship relative to each other; said base section defining a base section outer surface, said base section outer surface being provided with at least one longitudinal channel extending substantially and at least partially therealong.

9(currently amended). A pontoon as recited in claim 1, wherein said segment peripheral wall includes a base section, a generally opposed supporting section and a pair of spacing sections extending therebetween in a generally spaced apart relationship relative to each other; said supporting section

defining at least one longitudinal linking flange extending laterally therefrom in a direction leading generally adjacent from an adjacent spacing section.

10(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 9, wherein said spacing sections taper generally towards each other in a direction leading towards said base section.

11(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 1, wherein said segment inner volume defines a generally hollow ballast section extending at least partially longitudinally therealong; whereby said ballast section is at least partially fillable with a ballast material.

12(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 1, further comprising an end cap, said end cap including a cap wall for generally overriding said at least one end aperture of a longitudinal endmost of said shell segments.

13(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 12, wherein said end cap further includes a cap flange extending from said cap wall for attaching said cap wall to said longitudinal endmost of said shell segments.

14(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 12, further comprising a cap valve extending through said cap wall for selectively establishing a fluid communication between said segment inner volumes and the exterior of said shell.

15(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 13, wherein said cap flange is inserted into said segment inner volume between said longitudinal endmost of said shell segments and said filling component.

16(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 1, further comprising a valve extending between one of said segment inners volume and the exterior of said shell for selectively establishing a fluid communication between said segment inner volumes and the exterior of said shell.

17(currently amended). A pontoon as recited in claim 1, further comprising a connecting component connecting said female segment connecting ends of adjacent shell segments to one another, said connecting component at least partially filling said segment inner volumes adjacent said segment peripheral walls at said female segment connecting ends.

18(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 17, wherein said connecting component defines a connector longitudinal axis, said connecting component having a connector peripheral wall surrounding a connector inner volume extending longitudinally therethrough, said connector inner volume being in fluid communication with said segment inner volumes of adjacent said shell segments, whereby said filling component is slidably and successively insertable through said connector inner volume and said adjacent segment inner volumes in a direction generally along said connector longitudinal axis and shell longitudinal axis, respectively.

19(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 18, wherein said connector peripheral wall is configured and sized to longitudinally slidably fit into said segment inner volume of adjacent said shell segments.

20(original). A pontoon as recited in claim 19, wherein said connector peripheral wall has a periphery generally smaller than the periphery of said segment peripheral wall of adjacent said shell segments so as to longitudinally slidably fit thereinto.

21(currently amended). A shell for pontoon, said shell comprising:

- a generally elongated shell segment being made out of a generally rigid material, said shell segment defining a shell longitudinal axis, said shell segment having a segment peripheral wall extending between a pair of generally opposed longitudinal segment closing ends and surrounding a shell inner volume, said shell segment having a longitudinal throat section located intermediate said segment closing ends, said shell segment being dividable in a direction generally transverse to said shell longitudinal axis at a location adjacent said throat section into at least two longitudinal sections with a respective end aperture extending into respective said shell inner volume so as to allow said shell inner volumes to be at least partially fillable by a filling component.

22(canceled).

23(currently amended). A shell as recited in claim 21 claim 22, wherein said segment peripheral wall of said throat section is configured and sized to be longitudinally and slidably fittable into said shell inner volume ~~of the~~ of a remaining section of said shell segment.

24(original). A shell as recited in claim 23, wherein said throat section extends longitudinally inwardly from one of said longitudinal segment closing ends.

25(original). A shell as recited in claim 24, wherein said shell segment defines a first predetermined transversal dividing region at an interface between said throat section and a remaining portion of said shell segment.

26(original). A shell as recited in claim 25, wherein said shell segment defines a second predetermined transversal dividing region at an

interface between said throat section and said one of said longitudinal segment closing ends.

27(original). A shell as recited in claim 21, wherein said segment peripheral wall includes a base section, a generally opposed supporting section and a pair of spacing sections extending therebetween in a generally spaced apart relationship relative to each other; said base section defining a base section outer surface, said base section outer surface being provided with at least one longitudinal channel extending substantially and at least partially therealong.

28(currently amended). A shell as recited in claim 21, wherein said segment peripheral wall includes a base section, a generally opposed supporting section and a pair of spacing sections extending therebetween in a generally spaced apart relationship relative to each other; said supporting section defining at least one longitudinal linking flange extending laterally therefrom in a direction leading generally adjacent from an adjacent spacing section.

29(original). A shell as recited in claim 28, wherein said spacing sections taper generally towards each other in a direction leading towards said base section.

30(original). A shell as recited in claim 21, wherein said shell is manufactured using a rotational molding process.

31(original). A shell as recited in claim 21, wherein at least one of said generally opposed longitudinal segment closing ends has a generally hydrodynamically convex configuration. –